REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing Amendment, Claims 5, 7-13, and 16-21 are pending in the present Application. Claim 5 is amended to embrace cancelled subject matter. Claims 6, 14, and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 17-21 are new and find support at least at page 7 line 21 through page 8 line 7, and page 6 line 11 to page 15. No new matter has been added.

By way of summary, the Official Action presents the following issues: Claims 13 and 15 are objected to as reciting informalities, and Claims 5-8 and 10-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bottcher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,390,745, herein "Bottcher").

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The outstanding Official Action has objected to Claims 13 and 15 as containing informalities. As Claims 14 and 15 have been canceled, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection has been rendered moot.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

The outstanding Official Action has rejected Claims 5-8 and 10-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Bottcher. The Official Action contends that Bottcher discloses all of the Applicant's claim features. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants' amended Claim 5 recites, *inter alia*, a cold-shrinkable elastic sleeve that is tube shaped, comprising:

> ... wherein an inner surface of the internal semiconductive layer, an open inner surface of the reinforced insulation layer, and an inner surface of each of the stress-relief cones define an inner surface of the sleeve and the external semiconductive layer extends over an external surface of the reinforced insulation layer such that a length of the external semiconductive layer in the longitudinal direction of the sleeve is substantially the same as a total length of a region including the inner surface of the internal semiconductive layer and the open inner surface of the reinforced insulation layer, thereby leaving a portion of the reinforced insulation layer on each end of the sleeve uncovered by the external semiconductive layer. (emphasis added.)

Bottcher describes a tube (4) having an electrically insulating outer layer (5) and an electrically conductive layer (6) which is situated interior and along a length of the tube but does not extend to the open ends (7) and (8).[1] The internal conductive layer (6) is spaced apart from the stress grading layers (9) and (10). Additionally, as shown in Figure 4, a further embodiment is shown having an outer electrically conductive layer (13) continuous along an entire length of the tube (4). In use, the Bottcher tube provides connectivity between two cables so that the stress grading layer (9) and (10) are connected to respective predetermined positions of the tube cables. As can be appreciated, a stress grading layer is provided for each cable, two spaces are needed.[2]

Conversely, in an exemplary embodiment of the Applicants' claimed advancement, a cold-shrinkable elastic sleeve having a tube shape includes an internal semiconductive layer that includes an elastic material and a semiconductive material. The internal semiconductive layer extends in a central portion in a direction of a length of the sleeve, an inner surface of the internal semiconductive layer defining a substantial part of an inner surface of the sleeve. A reinforced insulation layer is formed at least around the internal semiconductive layer to reinforce the internal semiconductive layer, and extends on both sides of the internal semiconductive layer along the longitudinal direction of the sleeve. An external

[1] Bottcher, Figure 2, column 9, lines 43-49.
[2] Bottcher, Figure 4.

semiconductive layer includes an elastic material and a semiconductive material, the semiconductive layer is molded around and extends over a part of the reinforced insulation layer. Two stress-relief cones are provided, one stress-relief cone is formed at each end of the sleeve, each at a distance from the internal semiconductive layer along the longitudinal direction of the sleeve as intervened by the reinforced insulation layer, and each being covered around a part of an external surface thereof by the reinforced insulation layer. An external end portion of each stress-relief cone, with respect to the internal semiconductive layer, having an outer periphery which is uncovered by the reinforced insulation layer. An inner surface of the internal semiconductive layer, an open inner surface of the reinforced insulation layer, and an inner surface of each of the stress-relief cones define an inner surface of the sleeve. The external semiconductive layer extends over an external surface of the reinforced insulation layer such that the length of the external semiconductive layer and the longitudinal direction of the sleeve is substantially the same as a total length of a region including the inner surface of the internal semiconductive layer and the open inner surface of the reinforced insulation layer. In this way, a portion of the reinforced insulation layer on each end of the sleeve remains uncovered by the external semiconductive layer.

Bottcher does not disclose or suggest an external semiconductive layer extending only in a central portion in a direction of a length of the cold-shrinkable elastic sleeve. Specifically, Bottcher does not disclose both end portions of a sleeve lacking the external semiconductive layer above the reinforced insulation layer that covers the stress-relief cone on each end of the sleeve. In other words, Bottcher does not disclose or suggest the portion of the reinforced insulation layer which is around the stress-relief cone is uncovered or exposed.[3]

[3] See application Figure 1.

As described at column 9, lines 64-68 of Bottcher a description of Figure 4 is provided noting that:

> FIG. 4 shows one half of a cable splice having an enclosure made using the first article (inner tube) of FIG. 2 and the second article (outer tube) of FIG. 3.

As can be appreciated, the Official Action has taken the position that the outer electrically conductive layer (13) corresponds to the claimed outer semiconductive layer. Yet layer (13) of Bottcher is continuous throughout in a direction of a length of the recoverable enclosure. Thus, clearly, Bottcher fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' amended Claim 5 as there are no external insulation portions in a direction of the length of the tube as claimed.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection to Claims 5-8 and 10-16 under 35 U.SC. § 102 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application, including Claims 5, 7-13, and 16-21, is patently distinguished over the prior art, in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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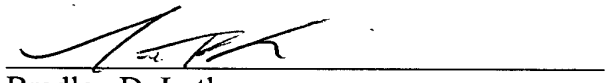

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